

# the dmh monthly

october 2007, issue 1



## The Director's Corner

Dr. Keith Schafer

With the assistance of some very talented interns who are working with DMH, we are launching this newsletter focusing specifically on communicating with the contracted and state employees who serve DMH consumers. I want to stress that the goal of this newsletter is to be equally relevant for the employees of our contract agencies as well as our DMH state employees in the field. It is important that we all remember that we need to see ourselves and be treated as equal members of the DMH family.

We are initiating this version of a newsletter because it creates another vehicle through which we can share perspectives between those fortunate enough to work directly with consumers and the rest of us who do not have that opportunity. One of the most frustrating things about being Department Director is the isolation of working in a central office and not having opportunity to routinely interact with people in the field actually doing the work. When I am lucky enough to get to sit down with field staff, I always learn new ideas that give me direction and vision and energize my work.

For example, we are considering a career pathway approach for direct care staff working in DMH facilities that will give them a better future in DMH facilities. That idea came directly from a conversation with the staffs at the NW Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center and Higginsville Habilitation Center. At the Ozark Center in Joplin, a DMH community provider, I obtained exciting ideas from Paula Baker and her staff about new approaches to housing and had the privilege of talking with a young consumer whose life had been dramatically affected by his new apartment. At St. Patrick Center in St. Louis, just yesterday, I had an incredibly exciting conversation with Dan Buck and his staff about the importance of Assertive Community Treatment Teams who utilize housing as the vehicle for making positive connections for persons who are homeless and have mental illness.

So, we will begin this effort with hope that it will enhance our ability to communicate with and learn from each other. I hope you will find it as valuable as I know it will be for me.

## DMH kicks off MSECC

August 2007 marked the annual kick-off of the Missouri State Employees Charitable Campaign (MSECC) and DMH dove right into the action.

DMH organizations across the state have been hosting staff events to kick off the campaign. Central Office hosted a picnic on Sept. 14 at McClung park in Jefferson City. In addition to barbeque the picnic featured a group of teenagers who perform drug and alcohol awareness skits for middle schools throughout Mid-Missouri. The "Show Me Players," an initiative of the Council for a Drug Free Youth, performed several of their skits for CO employees.

The Director of DMH, Dr. Keith Schafer, also got into the giving spirit. Winner of the CO drawing won a free dinner, cooked personally by Dr. Schafer at his home.

The Rolla Regional Center also kicked off their campaign with food and fun. On Sept. 12 employees were treated to

an all-you-can-eat pancake and sausage breakfast. They also had three drawings for two hours administrative leave. According to Betty Brumble, coordinator for RRC events and HR/Personnel representative, the raffle was greatly received by the staff.

The staff at Springfield Regional Center not only gave to charity, but also gave to each other. SRC hosted a free White Elephant Table. According to Ellie Widmer, event coordinator and SRC Community Resource Specialist, employees brought in items for two weeks prior to the giveaway. Names were drawn and the winners could take whatever they liked from the table.

"There were so many items, everyone got something," said Widmer.

The Hawthorn Children's Psychiatric Hospital held a speaker's event on Sept. 12. Three agencies spoke to employees: Epworth Children's Home, Boys

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photo taken by Lindsay Baish

The "Show Me Players" perform a skit featuring a recycling pirate to entertained CO employees. The group, consisting of freshman high school students from Jefferson City, performs skits around the area on the value of making good life choices.

## What's inside?

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# The Watercooler

Your brief monthly update on what's happening across DMH. For a full update on all DMH organizations and news visit DMH Online or visit the blog, [Missouri DMH Connections](#).

## ATR II expands services

Missouri's Department of Mental Health was awarded a \$14.5 million federal grant over three years to expand services for persons needing help for alcohol and other drug problems through the "Missouri Access to Recovery II: Partnering for Excellence" program.

The Access to Recovery (ATR) grant program offers substance abuse treatment through a voucher system that provides comprehensive assessment, professional treatment on a residential or outpatient basis, and a new component that is unique to this grant program—recovery support services from faith-based organizations and other community groups.

The new ATR grant will improve the statewide voucher system, enhance clinical services, and further expand the network of recovery providers.

## CPS sponsors suicide prevention event

Approximately 175 people attended the two day "Advancing Suicide Prevention in Missouri" conference in Jefferson City, September 10-11, 2007. Co-sponsored by DMH and Lincoln University, the conference educated health and mental health care providers, military personnel, educators, survivors of suicide, and many others.

Kevin Hines was a notable speaker at the conference who survived a suicide attempt in which he jumped from the Golden Gate Bridge in 2000. You can read his story in the Columbia Tribune by clicking [here](#).

## DMH disaster work recognized

Missouri Department of Mental Health's Disaster Communications Guidebook was named a "Promising Practice" to be included in [www.PandemicPractices.org](http://www.PandemicPractices.org), an online database of resources of model work in disaster preparedness.

The Disaster Communications Guidebook was written by DMH staff, and published by the Department of Health and Senior Services in an inter-agency collaboration as part of the state's comprehensive disaster planning. While the online database was developed specifically to provide flu pandemic planning, the guide covers key communication strategies to promote confidence and self-reliance when preparing for potential disasters.

## HHC staff and clients host parade

The Higginsville Habilitation Center hosted their second annual staff and clients parade on Sept. 14. This year the parade was held in conjunction with the Higginsville Country Fair.

The HHC parade involved around 50 clients and several community members. They marched through the facility's main loop. Residents decorated their bikes and wheelchairs; staff members brought horses, motorcycles and model cars to ride.

There were several floats constructed as well to showcase this year's theme, "A Piece of the Past." A barbeque and talent show were held after the parade, as well as several "old-fashioned" contests, including pie eating and a ring toss.

## Kick off, con't

and Girl's Town of St. Louis, and the Greater St. Louis Arts and Education Council. Door prizes and snacks were provided for those who attended.

The MSECC has been an annual campaign for nearly 20 years. For the past two years Missouri state employees raised over \$2 million for approximately 1,200 charities. Last year the DMH alone raised \$75,404.

Nancy Nickolaus, coordinator for the CO events and Program

Specialist for MRDD says she hopes the DMH will raise at least \$80,000 this year.

"It's such an easy way to give," said Nickolaus. "You donate through payroll deduction, you don't have to worry about sending in a monthly check, and you don't have to give that much. A dollar a month can make a huge difference."

The MSECC runs until the end of November.

## Congratulations, Donna Robinson!



"Donna began working for DMH CO on Oct. 8, 1962 in the Office of Administration in accounting. In her 45 years at DMH she has seen many technological advancements and made many friends. She is a dependable, responsible person who rarely misses a day of work. Donna's dedication to DMH is admirable." - Kim Rieke

To see news about your organization in The Watercooler, email your stories to:

[opamail@dmh.mo.gov](mailto:opamail@dmh.mo.gov)

by the 1st of each month. Let everyone know about the good work you're doing!



photo provided by Sherry Kilpatrick

The Higginsville Habilitation Center clients show off a Rocket-ship Float they built for the second annual HHC parade. HHC hopes that the parade will continue to be an annual event.



## Meet your Employee of the Month



**Mary Sinur**  
Service Coordinator III  
Kansas City Regional Center

### Why is Mary the EOM?

"In a time where individuals are more concerned about covering their own tails so to speak, Mary is helpful to and for others. She was recently promoted to the position of Service Coordinator III; she earned this position as a result of her experience, skill and ability to relate well with her consumers and coworkers."

### Thoughts about Mary from her coworkers:

"Mary Sinur is the most organized and knowledgeable employee I have had the privilege to work with. She always greets everyone with a smile no matter what her day is like. She is optimistic and provides needed encouragement and support to other staff when they are having a stressful day."

"Mary is one of the best service coordinators I have met since my employment with the state. I know that if I come to Mary with a question she will answer me with respect . . ."

"Mary is a coworker of excellence. She is always willing to help others and has a genuine concern for the families she supports."

**Congrats Mary, and  
thanks for all your hard work!**

**DON'T  
FORGET!**



● The first Mental Health Champions Celebration Committee is still seeking nominations for the 2008 Mental Health CHAMPIONS Awards. Anyone can make a nomination so go ahead and do it! You can find nomination forms by [clicking here](#). Nomination forms are due on Nov. 15 by 5 p.m. Also, they are still seeking entries for the Director's Creativity Showcase. Please submit client's

## getting *Inspired*

*Every day the employees at DMH are changing lives for the better. This month's inspirational story comes from Martha Jones, MSCJ and CCA II from Biggs Forensic Center at Fulton State Hospital.*

"On Tuesday evenings I bring one of four Furry Therapists in to visit the consumers on the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program. The consumers are empowered to visit the pet they choose: a Queensland Heeler named Bernice Agrippa, a black cat named Indigo Hard Drive, a ferret named Frieda Von Ferret, and a white 'kissing' llama named Lluvy Llama. Many of the consumers look forward to the pet visit all week. Some do not attend all of their scheduled group meetings, yet come devoutly to Pet Group."

The biggest breakthrough I ever observed was with a former consumer who heard voices and didn't talk much when he was first admitted. The first time the llama entered the ward, the consumer's eyes lit up and he smiled a huge smile, unseen before. He hugged the llama's long neck and rubbed his face in the long white fur. The consumer began to talk to the llama. He told the Lluvy how he had really been trying and how things were getting better. He fed the llama a treat and verbally thanked me for bringing the pet."

The consumer began to speak more and more with peers and staff and always to the pets when they came to visit. With the help of good treatment programming, correct medication and one white kissing llama, that consumer graduated out of the Biggs Forensic Center."

**Thanks to everyone who responded to  
the Success Story surveys! Keep letting  
us know about all your good work!**

writing, artwork, and crafts to:  
Office of Public Affairs  
1706 E. Elm St.  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

● Beginning Jan. 1 all expense reports and payroll checks for **state** employees must be direct deposit. If you have not enrolled in Direct Deposit please [click here](#) to do so.

● Open Enrollment for life insurance will take place through Oct. Sign up for an informational at [www.MCHCP.org](http://www.MCHCP.org) to have all your questions answered.

● Red Ribbon Week is Oct. 20-28.

● As of Nov. 15 all buildings and grounds of DMH facilities will be smoke-free.